M2517

Sunday Lunch

January 12, 1975

Barn

SIDE ONE

MR. NYLAND: So it's a new cassette again, not a remnant of last night. So I can really say whatever I want to about Gurdjieff.

I've said already so many things about him and about his life; his aim, as far as we could interpret that; and to what extent such a life at the present time can still be present, so that the memory actually becomes a reality. Of course it doesn't happen that way. We keep on thinking and imagining what was a person of Gurdjieff, what was he like, how did he behave. And we think about him, with his birthday, which, as you know, is tomorrow. What is the value that he has given? And it is usually that kind of acknowledgment of what the value is of a man is really what you have been able to get from it - from his life, from himself, from whatever he has left as a legacy.

We have one legacy which is important. Logically, it is ALL AND EVERYTHING. And when we think about Gurdjieff and the value he has, we turn again and again to ALL AND EVERYTHING to find out what he put in his words. And which book was rewritten several times and read to him and then corrected; and finally it was considered ready for publication. So there it is. And therefore, if you think of Gurdjieff, think of ALL AND EVERYTHING.

And that is very good, because when you think of Gurdjieff, if you consider ALL AND EVERYTHING, it is your life. The real reason for Gurdjieff existing and most likely why he called that book ALL AND EVERYTHING is that we have to consider of ourselves everything that we are. And that includes that what is existing now and also that what is potential. And if we consider our personality in the context with ordinary life and the way we live and the way we have been brought up, that is only part of it. Then there is a certain section that also exists in embryo, and that, of course, being part and embryonic, it has a chance of becoming something else. And whatever we talk, when we talk about potentiality, that is included in everything. When we talk about observing oneself, it includes everything of oneself to be observed. That is not to leave out just what you don't like to see. But everything that one is has to become observed by something which can act as observer.

Many times you must try to see if this 'I' you could imagine to be Gurdjieff. If you actually could understand a little bit more of what he was and not only judge from photographs, but what information you can pick up from different people who have known him or knew about him, and not go only by such people who have written about him. Because that what one writes in a book, like many times Ouspensky and Nicoll and all the others, they have been affected by Gurdjieff and take then whatever they like to embroider on it with whatever they think Gurdjieff meant.

Whenever one wants to study any kind of--in any kind of a direction, you always must go to the source where it comes from, if you want to give that kind of a direction an aim. If

you have a scientific desire to find out what is, let's say, the results of certain people, like chemists, being what they are, you don't take a book which writes about the chemist, you get a book written by the man when he describes his own experiments. And you don't be satisfied with someone else interpreting such experiments.

We have ALL AND EVERYTHING. That is the task for all of us when we believe in Gurdjieff. That in itself has nothing to do with whatever you believe may be in any form of esoteric knowledge, or the Gnostics, or whatever there is of the Church fathers, or whatever you feel in religion that is for you also important. It doesn't matter what anyone reads--writes about other people. But when there is something given, like in the Bible, about what one would do, then it is very essential to find out exactly how it is worded and not go by the interpretation of someone else. And I've said many times, the sole reason for that is you have a correction, a possibility of verification in the application of that what you wish to do in your ordinary life, and then seeing if that ordinary life changes in accordance with the prescription as given. If you consider yourself sick, you want a medicine that's going to cure you. Then you will know that that is the result of that medicine.

Now I'm not talking about a person who wants to lead a very lovely life for himself and is satisfied, because we really don't care very much about that. There are hundreds of thousands of people who are perfectly satisfied by reading every day the Bible and hope that they understand it. And it is far better to leave them alone and let them be whatever it is. We, as this Group, is interested in Gurdjieff. I've said many times, and

Gurdjieff only. I've compared it sometimes, like St. Paul preaching Christ, and he added, Christ crucified. It means a very definite something of Gurdjieff that exists in that what he has written as ALL AND EVERYTHING, and that very definitely something is objectivity. That is the sole reason he has written: so that a person can prepare himself during his lifetime on Earth to see what he might have to face when he dies, and in that process, starts to understand himself in his life as it is now and gradually becomes perhaps a little bit more conscious and mostly, I hope, can become a little bit more conscientious. Because that, after all, is the fundamental motivating reason for a person when he is alive: that he lives in accordance with the energy given to him by his feeling, which has to be expressed, and by the coloration of his emotions, which have to give him certain results in his life, so that the light on the path as coming from consciouness, can only be augmented by that what is conscientious for a person to know what is right and wrong in his life now - and we have no measure at the present time as long as we are asleep.

This is the main value of Gurdjieff. He has given something that you can eat. And when you eat it, you have to digest it. And then you have to see, after a little while maybe, what is the result - it is not obvious that it is instantaneous. It is obvious it isn't.

Whenever you plant a seed in the soil, you prepare the soil. You put the seed in - it doesn't come up immediately, it takes a couple of days before it appears that--that actually it has taken hold and starts to germinate. That is the way Work is.

You try to apply ALL AND EVERYTHING about all and everything. Anything you happen to think about and feel about regarding Work, what you understand and try to understand, you try to verify it constantly to see if it is in accordance with prescriptions. Which is very simple: impartiality and simultaneity. Those two combined make an exact--or make for an exact observation process, a correct one in accordance with the rules for which Gurdjieff wrote it. If he were satisfied with what other people had written, he wouldn't have written a book. He would have left it to people like Ouspensky or Nicoll or those who already were teaching, so-called. But Gurdjieff was not satisfied with that what was at that time when he started to write. And he even decided to publish it. That in itself has a meaning.

If we profess to be interested in Gurdjieff, then that's it. If I want to study chemistry and the certain experiments of Ostwald, I read Ostwald, I don't read Ireneus or someone else writing about Ostwald. And it is exactly the same with Gurdjieff. Why shouldn't I become interested in Gurdjieff if I believe in the possibility that Gurdjieff has a meaning for me which I cannot find somewhere else? Or, if I believe that it is somewhere else, how can I compare it unless I know something about Gurdjieff himself?

Sometimes I call Gurdjieff 'I'. I want to see what Gurdjieff would say about me and my behavior. I would like him at times to be present when I talk. I would like him to tell me afterwards and give me a judgment and tell me where I was wrong or what I should have said and should not have said or the way I said it. You see, to some extent, since he has died and since he is somewhere up in the higher regions, I can even pray to him.

And there is no question about it, why I do that: because I want to have a contact with that kind of a man. He had a meaning in my life and I am grateful for everything that he has given me.

Quite logically, Work itself is difficult to understand it in its--all its ramifications. It was difficult to be in the neighborhood of Gurdjieff and still to love him, because he had his own ways of behaving, mannerisms, many times things you couldn't like at all and were quite contrary to what man as a guru was supposed to be. But maybe that was helpful to break down certain concepts and preconceptions of that what we, being brought up in a certain surrounding in which we were constantly, you might say, unconscious, give an impression of some possibility of consciousness and enlightenment and actually Waking up. And then trying to see Gurdjieff from the standpoint from us to be Awake a little bit and then to see what was the value of him. That perhaps was the reason he tried to Wake you up by being a little, let's call it, extraordinary.

Of course it was not easy. But who expects life to be easy? Who expects that all of a sudden this total unconscious state in which we happen to live and have lived for many years, that that all of a sudden will disappear and that something else of conscious and conscientious material will take its place? And who wants to believe that we are entitled to it unless we work for it? Why should it be given? We are on Earth. That is the place we find unconsciousness and that is the reason why, when we are here, we have to find out why we are even here. And if we don't like this Earth, how can we get out of it? If we don't like, many times, the forms of our behavior, if we see that we are en-

gaged in many things quite unconsciously and do many things by habit, sometimes wanting to follow the line of least resistance only, not expending any energy when it costs us something, and that we hope that it can be given on a silver platter or a golden platter and a silver spoon. We as people on this Earth are not entitled to that, because the conditions of Mother Nature is unconsciousness - to keep us asleep. As a human being one doesn't want it, naturally, because you want to grow out of that if you have any guts. If you don't, keep sleeping. If you don't want Gurdjieff, don't have him, don't try to eat what he is saying. Take anything else that you wish, but it doesn't matter. You can find whatever you wish anywhere, as long as it is satisfying for yourself and can give you actually guidance in your life and can answer your problems and questions.

This, of course, is the main thing for verification. Verification means it will give me the truth. And about truth there is no questioning anymore. And it does not mean that I have to wait until I get as old as Gurdjieff or that I become as perfect as he was or perhaps as conscious and conscientious as a Man. That was Gurdjieff's life, it's not mine. It's not anybody's. Each person has his own life. But when you want an example or a possibility of something to strive for and you see that as an aim, then don't sit - just go ahead and Work. Don't contemplate. Don't consider. Don't meditate. Don't consider the possibility of a development without doing anything about it. Either it is you are in earnest about your life, you are in earnest about wanting to plant a seed somewhere, maybe in your inner life. Maybe you want to have a garden; but if you want it,

you have to Work. You make the garden of your life by planting the seeds you want to have flowers from, from where the flower is afterwards a fruit which you then again and again can eat. You make this life such that if there is a reincarnation you start on the kind of a level which represents the end of your development on this Earth. Whichever way you want to express it, it doesn't matter what you want to believe in.

The question always comes down to: what am I now at the present time and how can I at the present time understand myself? What are the different forms of behavior that are still a little bit in the dark and what is there already that I can start with? Don't wait til you have a full understanding in toto of what Gurdjieff means in writing that book, even after you've read it for three times. You will not as yet. There will be many things that remain a little bit incomprehensible and you may have to think about it for some time. And in thinking you prepare the soil. But then, when you want something to grow in the soil, you have to start Working. That is where the difference comes in. Just read the book, let it enter into you, and by means of Work, the seed will start to germinate.

I think really what Gurdjieff means is for a man to become so simple that he can understand for himself what is necessary for him within his limitations of knowledge, and that gradually in such an understanding and Working, he can change. And that after some time and whenever, from time to time, even if sometimes he takes time off to rest and then let that what is within him germinate and simmer, and then after a little while again there is a definite emptiness which for him is a hunger which he has to still and then he will come and read some more. Or he will

Work some more. It will go up and down, but it will gradually straighten out. It need not be up and down all the time. But you have to have patience. And you have to see how difficult it is to overcome the obstacles of your own karma, which of course is your personality the way it is, and the wish to find out what this personality is like is to see what kind of karma you will have to eat. You will have to eat yourself in order to become an individuality. Trogoegocrat: I eat myself. That is the meaning.

And so, on his--on the memory of his birthday, trying to remember that what is important. The importance of Gurdjieff is through his life, having given that what he felt necessary after his accident and turning to become an author. Wanting to communicate to the people alive then and after he had died, something of value which could give them the possibility of a further understanding of the aim of a conduct for their life, a consciousness and conscience, in the sense of wishing to become unified as a personality becoming one individuality, as something that then could continue to live in the hereafter of infinity.

These are the things we consider, we think about it, we say yes to that. If you want to Work, Work. You can be grateful to Gurdjieff for whatever he can give you. You don't have to be grateful for the things you don't understand. But then you can become grateful for your wish to want to understand it and then you will have to Work on yourself to see if actually that kind of verity, that kind of truth, can become a partner of your life; so that then in living, you will be able to use what you know about truth and remain honest in your attempts, and that you constantly see the tendency of your personality almost, I hope, can disappear

one after the other, so that in that sense you become simpler and simpler, realizing that what you are, that is actually what you are; that what you wish to become, you have to work for.

(Will we turn it?)

SIDE TWO

MR. NYLAND: You see, it's interesting; we have a large group, we have a good group. It was so beautiful this morning. You see, we had a certain project - a big slab of stone that had to be moved into my house and we had to open the wall and - I don't know how many people were there, just as many, probably thirty or forty, I don't know, around the stone. And the stone became like a centipede. It was wonderful when they lifted it up and then stumblingly and someone leaning on the other but not wanting to let go of that stone, because it had to be kept up, and it had to be moved about - I don't know - thirty or forty feet. And then lifting it up and getting it in the house and then rearranging it and getting it in the proper place. It was such a beautiful thing to see that as cooperation. Because here there was one aim. Everybody understood it. That is where we want the stone to be; it is now outside, it's got to go inside.

An aim like that, if one understands that mutually; we live in the outside world and we live on the outside, on the periphery. The aim is to get something that is within that really can be much more reliable and that ultimately will survive.

The stone is for a fireplace. I hope when we have a fire in it, it will warm, it will give off some light, sporadically, because a fire doesn't burn that--that evenly. But mostly it is

for the sake of warming up, of actually getting a little more, let's call it, excited, a little higher temperature - Orage used to say, to get a little bit more hot under the collar. To be, he also said, in a state of puff. That is a person who brings his breath up to the level where he could actually exhale, but not exhale as yet. When he then has energy ready to exhale because that what was air has satisfied him.

That, of course, is a state we don't experience many times. But on a memory of Gurdjieff and thinking about it and now trying to concentrate on that what he is and what the value is in one's life, I hope when you drink that you really concentrate in that very short movement of lifting your arm, just taking a sip, just putting that glass back again; and that what is within, let it go to the right place. Try to remember Gurdjieff. And I hope that in all your life, whatever length it may have, you will never forget him. If you can remain grateful, you will be blessed.

To Gurdjieff.

To make it a little exceptional, I will try to play a little on the organ. Peter tuned it, so we're entitled to try it, huh, Peter?

(Music)

END TAPE

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Rough Typed: Liz Gardam
Proofed: Liz Gardam
Final Proofed: Liz Gardam